



## **COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM**

*This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from early April to end of September 2013.*

### **The United Nations**

- The IPU pursued its efforts to provide a parliamentary perspective to the post-2015 development agenda. It relayed the key messages of the Quito Communiqué to the May and June sessions of the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly that is designing a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); provided input to the UN Secretary-General's Report for the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly in September; and participated in a thematic debate of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 4 July, where the role of parliaments in the post-2015 development agenda was discussed.
- The IPU explored other avenues of cooperation with ECOSOC within the context of this body's ongoing restructuring with stronger multi-stakeholder engagement. Meetings with the President of ECOSOC took place in New York and Geneva. The IPU followed the substantive session of ECOSOC during the month of July in Geneva, where it also raised gender equality and human rights issues.
- The IPU made a significant contribution to the May session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, where plans for a parliamentary contribution to next year's World Conference on Indigenous Peoples were outlined. The outcome of the Forum explicitly welcomed such a contribution, including through a multi-stakeholder hearing at the United Nations in May 2014.
- A first symposium of the 2014 session of the Development Cooperation Forum took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in early June. The IPU participated with a delegation of 10 parliamentarians in a discussion meant to help reconfigure the global partnership for development in view of the new post-2015 development agenda. The accountability role of parliaments in ensuring that the global partnership delivers better results at the country level was underscored.
- Preparations got underway for this year's Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in November. For the first time, the President of ECOSOC will co-sponsor the Hearing together with the incoming President of the General Assembly at its 68<sup>th</sup> session. The Hearing will be devoted to the post-2015 development agenda and will provide an opportunity for MPs to engage directly with members of the Open Working Group on the SDGs.

- The IPU actively promoted the UN-proclaimed International Day of Democracy on 15 September by encouraging Member Parliaments to mark the Day through a special activity or political statement. The main theme of the Day, agreed in cooperation with the United Nations, was "Strengthening Voices for Democracy".
- In close coordination with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a mission of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs was dispatched to Cote d'Ivoire in mid-June. The mission took the cue from the outcome of last year's Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations to examine in greater detail how the parliament of a post-conflict country could work together with UN field operations towards achieving political stability.
- Together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the IPU helped organize a parliamentary meeting on governance for disaster risk reduction as a contribution to on-going consultations towards a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the post-2015 development agenda. The meeting was held in Geneva on 20 May.
- On 23 May, at the invitation of the President of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament and as part of the Working Group's official programme of work, the IPU organized a parliamentary panel discussion at the United Nations Office at Geneva aimed at spurring government action to initiate comprehensive negotiations in the area of nuclear disarmament. The panel heard several presentations, including by the President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, and was well-attended by UN Member States, experts, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.
- Based on a favourable decision taken by the IPU governing bodies in Quito, the IPU worked closely with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and the World Future Council on selection of the 2013 Future Policy Award. The jury, of which the IPU is a member, met to discuss the 25 national and regional policies that had been submitted for consideration. The award ceremony, scheduled to take place on 23 October at UN Headquarters in New York, will recognize exemplary and innovative disarmament policies that can inspire action by other countries.
- The IPU began discussions with the UN Security Council and its 1540 Committee, which monitors implementation of its namesake resolution on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Committee would like to engage more closely with parliaments and the IPU to facilitate implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 through proactive national legislation and stronger parliamentary oversight. Similar interest has been expressed by the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. The Chair of the 1540 Committee confirmed his availability to attend the next session of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs during the 129<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva.

### **UN Women**

- Within the framework of the joint IPU-UN Women programme of support to the Equal Opportunities Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, a report on the findings of a gender-sensitive self-assessment, together with a corresponding plan of action, were officially adopted and launched in parliament. This marks the beginning of the implementation phase of the report's recommendations.
- The IPU model of how to promote the participation of women in its bodies and policies has been highlighted as an example of best practice in a report issued in May by UN Women and the Mary Robinson Foundation. UN Women recommended that the IPU

example be studied and possibly replicated in the context of climate change and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. The IPU subsequently participated in a panel in Bonn on promoting gender balance and women's empowerment in the UNFCCC process, where it provided practical advice on making political processes gender-sensitive.

#### **UNDP**

- As a follow-up to last year's seminal *Global Parliamentary Report*, the IPU and UNDP, together with the Parliament of Morocco, organized a regional workshop in Rabat on 5 and 6 June on "The evolving relationship between citizens and parliaments in the Arab world". The meeting examined ways of capitalizing on the political and institutional shake-up caused by the Arab Spring.
- With the support of UNDP country representatives and in cooperation with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), the IPU worked to organize a number of focus groups in a select number of parliaments to provide global-level feedback on how parliaments are working to mainstream implementation of the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (IPoA).
- The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and delivering capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. This has been the case over the past six months in Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Pakistan and Palestine.

#### **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Human Rights Council**

- The IPU co-organized a panel on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) during the Council's May session in Geneva. The panel considered several ways for parliaments to complement the work of the Council through more proactive engagement both domestically and at the Council. In particular, it recommended that parliamentarians attend the sessions of the Council, including its UPR, as part of their national delegations. It was also proposed that a series of regional workshops on interaction between national parliaments and the Council be held in 2014.
- The IPU participated in a panel organized by the OHCHR on accountability for the implementation of the future post-2015 development agenda from a human rights perspective. The event took place in New York on 22 May and discussed inter alia how international human rights commitments can be translated into enforceable legislation at the national level.

#### **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

- As a follow-up to the IPU emergency item resolution adopted at the Quito Assembly earlier this year on the humanitarian impact of the crisis in Syria, the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, with the support of UNHCR, carried out a mission to Jordan in June to examine the situation of Syrian refugees and their impact on host countries. The mission sought to gather first-hand information on the plight of refugees, paying special attention to the situation of women and children. It visited refugee camps and urban areas, which host the bulk of the refugee population in the region. It held meetings with high-level government and parliamentary authorities as

well as with UNHCR national and regional representatives. As an immediate follow-up to the mission, and based on the Committee's preliminary findings, the IPU President launched an appeal to the parliamentary community to support the UN Regional Response Plan 5 (RRP5) in support of Syrian refugees and host communities. The mission will present its full findings and report to the IPU Assembly in Geneva in October 2013.

### **UNAIDS**

- The IPU participated in the Thanda Dialogue on AIDS Governance, an informal brainstorming meeting convened jointly by UNAIDS and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in South Africa at the end of May. The meeting sought to identify future directions for governance of the AIDS response, amplify its voice, strengthen norms of inclusion and non-discrimination, and identify novel forms of accountability. The outcomes of the meeting will inform the future work plans of the African Union and UNAIDS.

### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

- The IPU continued to receive financial support from WHO for its project on maternal, newborn and child health. This support has allowed the IPU to conduct various activities, such as the multi-country seminar hosted by the Bangladesh Parliament on accountability for women's and children's health (Dhaka, 30-31 July 2013).
- The IPU pursued its support of WHO efforts to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health established by the UN Secretary-General, and contributed to the report of Independent Expert Review Group.
- In turn, WHO, together with UNICEF, reciprocated by participating in the technical Reference Group of the IPU project on maternal, newborn and child health.

### **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

- UNFPA provided financial and logistical support for the field testing of the IPU orientation manual on maternal, newborn and child health for parliaments. The field test was conducted in Uganda and saw the participation of 25 parliamentarians, who provided much-needed input to the final stages of producing the manual.
- UNFPA continued to participate in the technical Reference Group of the IPU project on maternal, newborn and child health.

### **World Trade Organization (WTO)**

- Preparations got underway at the IPU and the European Parliament for the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, which will take place in conjunction with the 9<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali (MC9) in early December. The Indonesian House of Representatives will be playing host and providing logistical and other support to the parliamentary event. A meeting of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference was held in Brussels in May. It stressed the need for MC9 to make progress on four key issues: trade facilitation, agriculture, food security and issues of particular concern to the least developed countries.